

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# Finding the Right Home

## 1 Looking for an Apartment

*Directions:* Read or act out the following passage.

Dimitri and Isabel Gonzalez are married. They have two children, ages 2 and 3. Isabel is expecting a new baby in five months. Their apartment is too small. They are looking for a new apartment.



Dimitri and Isabel have seen many places. Now they are looking at an apartment on Elm Street. It is in an old house.

*[The landlord is showing them the kitchen.]*

*Landlord:* Here's the kitchen. There's enough room for a table.

*Dimitri:* Isabel, do you think this is big enough?

*Isabel:* Oh, yes. I like the kitchen. This apartment is large and bright. There is plenty of room for the children to play.

*Dimitri:* Hmm, you are right. They could also play outside. We are in the city, but this is a quiet street.

*Isabel:* *[Asks the landlord.]* Is this apartment near public transportation?

*Landlord:* Yes. There is a bus stop two blocks from this apartment.

*Dimitri:* Where is the closest laundromat?

*Landlord:* The laundromat is on the corner. There is a small grocery store around the corner, too.

*Dimitri:* There are storm windows on every window. I like that.

*Isabel:* How much is the rent? Do we have to pay a security deposit?

*Landlord:* The rent is \$700 each month. You must pay the heat, electricity, and telephone in addition. You must sign a lease for one year. I require two months rent now—the first month and the last month. But, there is no security deposit.

*Dimitri:* [Looks around.] Is the heat gas or oil?

*Landlord:* It's gas.

*Isabel:* How much does it cost to heat this apartment?

*Landlord:* It costs about \$100 each month to heat. Of course, the winter months will cost much more than \$100 and the summer months will cost much less; \$100 is an average figure.

*Dimitri:* I am very happy with the apartment. We would like to live here. Before we sign the lease, I have a question. This is a rather old house. Many old houses have lead paint. Some of the paint is peeling and chipping. Is there lead paint in this apartment? My wife is pregnant. We have two small children. I'm worried about their health.

*Landlord:* Umm, I don't know.

*Isabel:* Would you find out for us?

*Landlord:* Ah . . . sure, I guess so.

*Dimitri:* Thanks.

*Landlord:* Here's the lease. You need to decide quickly. A lot of people are interested in this apartment.

*Dimitri:* OK. We will call you about the lead paint. Thanks again. You should hear from us soon. Goodbye.



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## 2 Activity

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**Directions:** Draw a map of the neighborhood. Where is the bus stop, the laundromat, and the grocery store? You will need to add more details.

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## 3 Vocabulary

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**Directions:** Review the vocabulary words below and define each using simple English terms.

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transportation (*n.*)

street(s) (*n.*)

available (*adj.*)

utility(ies) (*n.*)

rent (*v.*)

landlord(s) (*n.*)

kitchen(s) (*n.*)

apartment(s) (*n.*)

bedroom(s) (*n.*)

lead (*n.*)

heat (*n.*)

parking (*n.*)

lease(s) (*n.*)

electricity (*n.*)

storm windows (*n.*)

tenant(s) (*n.*)

dining room(s) (*n.*)

laundromat(s) (*n.*)

security deposit(s) (*n.*)

location (*n.*)

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## 4 Review and Discuss

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**Directions:** Review “Looking for an Apartment” and answer the following questions.

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1. Why are Dimitri and Isabel looking for a new apartment? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Describe the apartment they want to rent. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

3. What questions do Dimitri and Isabel ask the landlord? Why do you think they ask so many questions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why is Dimitri worried about lead in the apartment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Does the apartment have lead in it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## **5** Topics for Discussion

*Directions:* Describe some of your personal experiences in looking for a home. Answer the following questions.

1. Where do you live now? Do you rent or do you own your home? What do you like about the place you live in now? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What do you think about when you look for a house or an apartment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many times have you moved? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you have a landlord or tenants? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you know if there is lead paint in the building you live in now? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6**

## Act Out the Scene

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**Directions:** Many of us may feel uncomfortable confronting landlords and others about the condition of our homes. Using the information below, act out a scene between a tenant and a landlord.

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**Tenant:** You are looking at an apartment. It is in an old house. What questions do you ask the landlord? Think about rent, lead, security deposit, heat, parking, and the lease. For example, you think the apartment has lead paint. What do you ask the landlord?

**Landlord:** You own an old house. There are some problems with the house. You want to have good tenants. How would you answer the question about lead paint? How would you make the house safer?

**7**

## Deciding on the Right Apartment

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**Directions:** Read or act out the following passage.

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Dimitri and Isabel have seen two apartments that they like. One is on Elm Street, the other is on Maple Street. Today they must make a decision.

**Dimitri:** Isabel, I called the owner of the apartment on Elm Street.

**Isabel:** What did he say about the lead paint?

**Dimitri:** He doesn't know anything.

**Isabel:** What should we do?

**Dimitri:** I like the location on Elm Street. The apartment is inexpensive and near public transportation.

**Isabel:** I don't know. I'm worried about lead paint. The paint on the windowsills was peeling. I think the children will not be safe there. Let's think about the apartment on Maple Street. The location was not as nice. But there was no chipping or peeling paint. The windows are new, the floors are covered with carpet.

**Dimitri:** You are right. The apartment on Maple Street is safer for the children. Also, the landlord told us there was some lead paint in the building.

**Isabel:** Yes. We will still have to be careful.

**Dimitri:** I know. We will wash the children's hands before they eat. We'll clean all the toys because they put them in their mouths.

**Isabel:** And we need to vacuum the carpet every day.

**Dimitri:** Isabel, these are the things we always do. The landlord will help us make the apartment lead-free.

*Isabel:* There's one more thing. We need to test the water. That's easy to do.

*Dimitri:* OK. We'll move to Maple Street. I'll call the landlord and tell him we want to sign the lease. Then I'll call the landlord on Elm Street. I'll tell him we are not interested.

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***Note to Student:*** Each family will have its own decision to make when it rents an apartment. The family should consider factors such as convenience, cost, amount of space, and hazards like lead in paint and water. Discuss how you would decide in this case.

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